

### REMARKS

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the subject application in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

To place the application in better form, Applicant submits herewith a substitute specification, which includes a new abstract. For the Examiner's convenience, also provided is a marked-up copy of the original specification showing the portions thereof which are being changed. The substitute specification includes the same changes as are indicated in the marked-up copy. Applicant's undersigned attorney has reviewed the substitute specification and submits that the substitute specification contains no new matter.

Claims 16-25 are presented for consideration in lieu of claims 1-15, which have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 16 is the sole independent claim. Support for these claims can be found in the original application, as filed. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

### Response to Restriction Requirement

Applicant respectfully traverses the restriction requirement set forth in the above-noted Office Action. The Examiner had previously set forth a restriction requirement between two groups of claims: Group I, claims 1-13, directed to a movable stage apparatus, and Group II, claims 14 and 15, directed to a device manufacturing method.

The Examiner asserts that the inventions of Groups I and II have acquired a separate status in the art because of different classification and divergent subject matter. These contentions are respectfully traversed.

Applicant submits that the inventions of Groups I and II are closely related in the field of exposure using movable stages that a proper search of any of the claims would, of necessity, require a search of the others. Applicant submits, therefore, that all of the claims can be searched simultaneously, and that a duplicative search, with possibly inconsistent results, may occur if the restriction requirement is maintained.

Applicant further submits that any nominal burden placed upon the Examiner to search an additional subclass or two, necessary to determine the art relevant to Applicant's overall invention, is significantly outweighed by the public interest in not having to obtain and study several separate patents in order to have available all of the issued patent claims covering Applicant's invention. The alternative is to proceed with the filing of another application, consisting of the same disclosure, and being subjected to substantially the same search, perhaps by a different Examiner on a different occasion. This places an unnecessary burden on both the Patent and Trademark Office and on Applicant.

In the interest of economy, for the Office, for the public-at-large, and for Applicant, Applicant requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the restriction requirement.

Nevertheless, in order to comply with the requirements of 37 CFR 1.143, Applicant confirms the provisional election, with traverse, to prosecute the invention of Group I, namely, claims 1-13.

#### Remarks Regarding Office Action

Applicant notes with appreciation that claims 11 and 12 were indicated as containing allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form to include the recitations of their base and intervening claims. To expedite allowance of this application,

Applicant has rewritten allowable claims 1, 3, 9 and 11 in independent form as new independent claim 16. Applicant submits, therefore, that these changes render independent claim 16, as well as claims 17-25 depending therefrom, allowable at the outset.

Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action.

The Examiner has rejected to the drawings and required that FIG. 6 be labeled as “PRIOR ART.” FIG. 6 has been so labeled as illustrated in the Replacement Sheet attached to this response. Accordingly, Applicant submits that this objection has been overcome. Such favorable indication is requested.

Claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner asserted that the recitation of “said reticle stage” in claim 2, line 10, and claim 3, line 13, lacks proper antecedent basis. The Examiner further added that claim 1, from which these claims variously depend, does not recite “a reticle stage”, but does recite a “master stage.” Claims 2 and 3 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Nevertheless, the Examiner’s comments were taken into consideration when presenting new claims 16-25. Accordingly, Applicant requests favorable reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Turning now to the art rejections, claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Japanese patent document number 10-012539 to Nobushige. Claims 3-5, 7 and 8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Nobushige document in view of the Kim et al. article. Claims 6 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Nobushige document in view of the Kim et al. article as applied above to claim 5, and further in view of European patent document number 1 143 492

A1 to Takahashi. Claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the Nobushige document in view of the Kim et al. article as applied above to claim 3, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,281,655 to Poon et al. Applicant submits that the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, does not teach or suggest many features of the present invention, as previously recited in claims 1-7, 9 and 12. Therefore, these rejections are respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, Applicant submits that independent claim 16, for example, as presented, amplifies the distinctions between the present invention and the cited art.

Independent claim 16 recites a movable stage apparatus including a reticle stage on which a reflecting reticle is to be mounted, in which when a space is divided by a plane including a reflection surface of the reticle, a guide surface to guide movement of the master reticle stage is arranged in a space opposite to a space where an exposure light beam to be reflected by the reticle passes. The reticle stage includes a coarse movement stage which reciprocally moves on the guide surface formed on a base of the movable stage apparatus in a scanning direction along the guide surface in non-contact with the coarse movement stage and having a six-axis alignment mechanism. The reflection surface of the reticle is arranged to face vertically downward, and the fine movement stage is supported in non-contact with the coarse movement stage and is positioned in six-axis directions by a six-axis alignment mechanism, which can perform position control of the coarse movement stage in six-axis alignments, and by a self weight support mechanism which supports a weight of the fine movement stage. The six-axis alignment mechanism does not perform position control of the fine movement stage. The fine movement stage is urged against the coarse movement stage by the magnetic force, and abuts against an alignment section arranged on the coarse movement stage, so that a position and posture of the fine movement stage are regulated.

Applicant submits that none of the cited art teaches or suggests salient features of Applicant's present invention, as recited in independent claim 16.

For the reasons noted by the Examiner, Applicant submits that the features now recited in independent claim 16 are not found in the cited art, whether that art is taken individually or in combination. Notably, the Examiner relies on the Nobushige document for showing a movable stage apparatus that includes a master stage on which a reflecting master is to be mounted, the Kim et al. article to show a fine movement stage having a six-axis alignment mechanism for use in a photolithography system, the Poon et al. patent for teaching a stage assembly with a coarse stage and a fine stage, both of which are not constrained along the X, Y and Z axes, and the Takahashi publication for showing a movable stage apparatus for reticle stage in which a coarse movement stage and the stators of linear motors move in opposite directions. Applicant submits, however, that none of the cited art, whether taken individually or in combination, teaches the arrangement of the reticle stage in the movable stage apparatus of the present invention, as recited in independent claim 16.

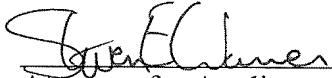
For the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that the present invention, as recited in independent claim 16, is patentably defined over the cited art, whether that art is taken individually or in combination.

Dependent claims 17-25 also should be deemed allowable, in their own right, for defining other patentable features of the present invention in addition to those recited in independent claim 16. Further individual consideration of these dependent claims is requested.

Applicant submits that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Applicant requests favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action and an early Notice of Allowance.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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